

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Object data is stored in association with a plurality of attribute words categorized according to sentence elements of a natural language, and an object data search is efficiently narrowed using a simple search criterion input. A database stores object data in association with a plurality of attribute words categorized according to the sentence elements of a natural language. An input unit receives an input of a search criterion in the form of a sentence of the natural language. A criterion retrieval unit analyzes the search criterion in the form of the sentence and retrieves one of a plurality of search words respectively corresponding to sentence element categories of the natural language. An object retrieval unit searches the database using each of the search words respectively associated with the sentence element categories, retrieves the object data associated with the attribute words that match a single search word or a plurality of search words wherein relationships existing between at least said one of said plurality of search words corresponding to the sentence element categories of the natural language are used with information features associated with the attribute words to further refine searching and an output apparatus for outputting the object data retrieved.